



17 November 2006

### Thanksgiving and Holiday Season Safety

1. Thanksgiving and the holiday season will be here before we know it. This is a special time of year. Thanksgiving provides an opportunity to reflect on our freedom and give thanks for our blessings. Christmas and Hanukkah are traditional times to gather with family and friends and share the joy of the season. As we celebrate over the holidays with our loved ones, let us take time to think about those who are deployed in support of our Nation's conflicts. Let us also remember to remain vigilant in terms of safety.
2. I recently pledged our support of the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff goal to reduce accident rates in fiscal year 2007 by 20 percent. I am fully confident that we will meet this goal if the caring spirit of the holiday season carries over into our relationships with fellow Soldiers and our Under the Oak Tree counseling. You can make a difference in someone's life this holiday season by showing you care and practicing the concepts of *Don't Walk By*. Our caring about the welfare of our battle buddies will result in fewer accidents and help prevent fatalities.
3. Our fatality rate so far this fiscal year is lower than it was last year at this time. However, even one death is too many. We recently lost two young Soldiers in a tragic nighttime encounter with a high-speed train. This tragedy represents the stark reality of what can happen if we do not consider the possible consequences of our actions.
4. We can help ensure that this holiday season will be a safe one by planning carefully to identify and mitigate hazards. Previous holiday seasons have been marred by excessive alcohol consumption, vehicle crashes, suicides, domestic violence, quarters fires, and recreational injuries, all of which take people away from the mission. Let us keep this in mind as we plan our celebrations and take steps to avoid dangerous situations. Those who plan to drive should use the Automated Safety Management Information System (ASMIS)-2 privately owned vehicle risk-assessment tool to help ensure a safe trip.
5. I am grateful for your dedicated service to our Nation. Stay in the fight by actively managing those conditions that could take you or your buddy out of the Global War on Terrorism. Think through your plans, identify the hazards, and know your personal limitations. In other words, *Own the Edge* as you enjoy the holidays!

DAVID D. McKIERNAN  
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Commanding

**McKIERNAN SENDS #5-07**